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PREPRINT

E3: Education, Experience, Employment The Economic Ladder to Success

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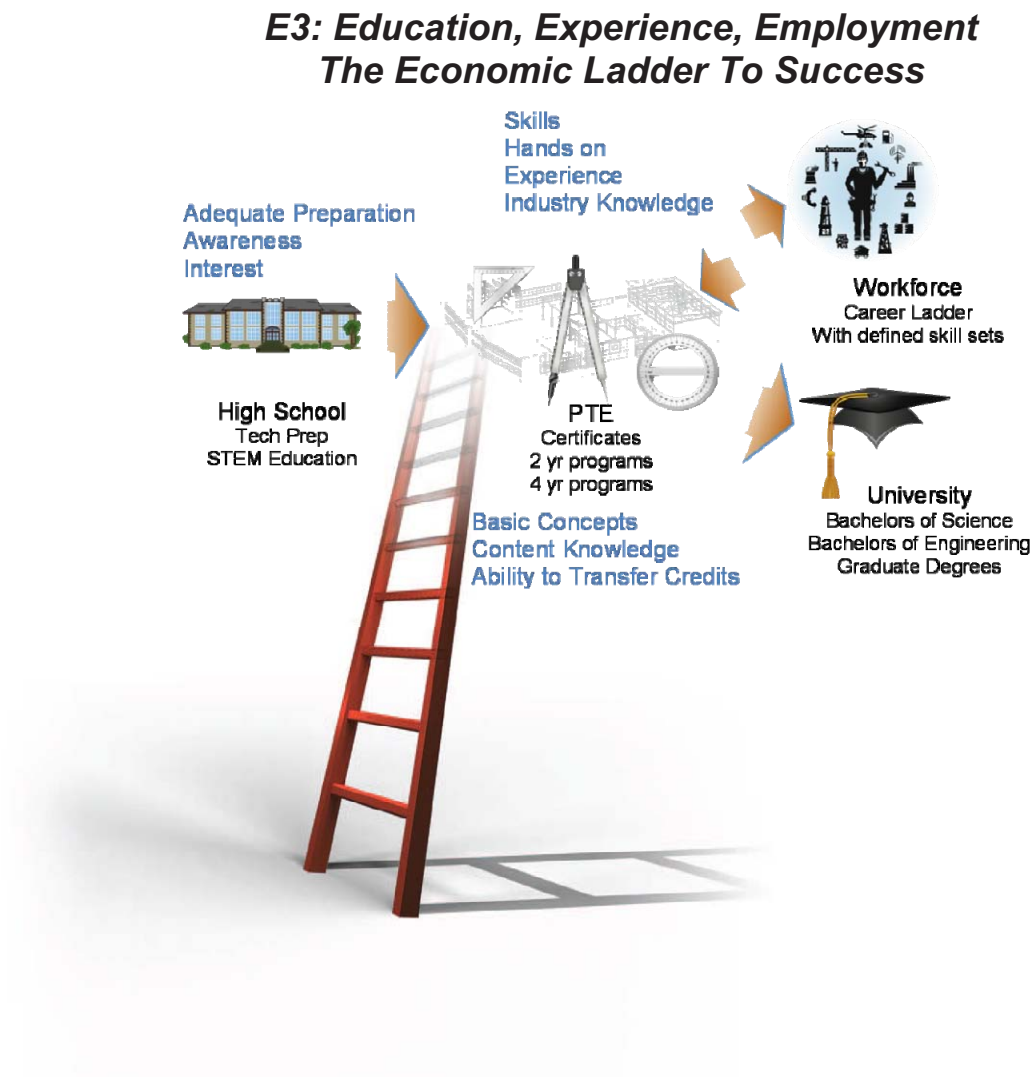

Idaho Learn and Earn Blueprint Design

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) literate citizenry is critical for Idaho's economy to effectively compete and grow in today's global marketplace and enhance Idaho workforce capabilities. Idaho's blueprint presents a collaboration design developed by a group of Idaho stakeholders including state level (STEM) educators, state and federal government, other agencies, and industry across the state. The purpose the Idaho Learn and Earn Blueprint Design is to describe a comprehensive plan for improving STEM education in Idaho through a collaborative partnerships and a series of grant supported projects underpinning this strategic design process building pathways to overcome hurdles in today's economy, and moving communities and families up their economic ladder.

The Idaho Learn and Earn Blueprint Design focuses on three industry sectors; energy, advanced manufacturing, and health care. All are important in Idaho and have room for job growth potential among both displaced workers and graduates. Representatives from each sector are members of the design team and assist in developing grants and implementing the actions outlined in the design as the program goes forward.

Idaho's current programs are generally institution specific. Each of the state's two-year colleges, along with regional groups and employers, are already working towards improving STEM education across the state. A key aspect of this design is to bring these groups together to focus on four unique goals:

1. Providing industry driven curriculum directly tied to skill based career needs
2. Enhancing collaboration among stakeholders
3. Providing access to learn and earn programs
4. Improving public and student awareness and interest in targeted industry sector career and educational opportunities.

The majority of the educational focus is included in the actions of the first goal. At the center of this focus is the development of skill-based curriculum clusters and career ladders, as well as the establishment of three pilot Technology Career Education Centers on college campuses in Northern, Western, and
Eastern Idaho. These actions provide pathways to new employment opportunities by allowing students and displaced workers to pursue education and training specific to the three targeted industry sectors—providing ideal candidates to help these industries continue to grow within the state.

In addition, these goals focus on increasing efficiency and quality of the state's programs beyond the classroom, while increasing the public awareness and improving the public perception of community and two-year colleges and the careers they lead to.

In short, the Idaho Learn and Earn Blueprint Design blueprint provides a plan for increased student participation, improved education through industry-specific curriculum and opportunities, improved experience through industry involvement and collaboration, and improved employment by providing employers with skilled workers to fill their needs. The success of this program leads to an increase in the availability of skilled STEM-literate Idaho workforce members in the future.

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